لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

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THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

Tabligh 1349—February 1970

EDITORS

S. D. AHMAD **M. G. AHMAD**

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

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The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was born in 1835 at Qadian, a village in India. In the eighties of the 19th century, he was called to the office of world Reformer to combat the current of anti-religious philosophies and to explode the Christian theory of redemption based on the fiction of Christ's death on the Cross and to tell the Christians and Muslims to call off their hope for a second visit from Christ as he had been gathered to his forefathers and barred like all mortals from coming back to the world; and that he, the Promised Messiah, had come instead.

The Promised Messiah initiated the Ahmadiyya Movement to revive faith in God, challenging rival churches to a spiritual contest to seek Divine sanction for the religion He favoured, through prayer and appeal to Him for guidance and arbitration in the matter, by means of His signs, to re-establish the glory of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, to expound and disseminate spiritual beauties and moral excellences of the teachings of the Holy Quran, to wean men from war - like tendencies and to educate world opinion in favour of renunciation of war as a means of settling disputes, to infuse hope, faith and courage in the drooping hearts of Muslims and all the depressed races and nations of the world, to warn the exploiters, slave-drivers, and pedlars in sin against the evil consequences of their evil ways, to collect under one banner all the true followers of Islam and lovers of peace and to inculcate among them the spirit of tolerance, goodwill and self-less fellow-service and a feeling of true brotherhood.

The Promised Messiah passed away in 1908 and was succeeded by his foremost votary and closest companion, Hazrat Haji Hakim Maulvi Nooruddin, Khalifatul Masih I. After his death in 1914, the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Haji Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, was chosen as Khalifatul Masih II. During his 52-year long leadership, the Khalifatul Masih II organized a world-girdling chain of mosques and missions. On his death on November 8, 1965, the electoral college named, with one accord, Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad, the late Khalifatul Masih's son and the Promised Messiah's grandson, Khalifatul Masih III.

For further information about the Movement, its activities and aims and objectives and literature, enquiries may be addressed to the nearest Ahmadiyya Mission or direct to

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It is open to all for discussing problems connected with the religious and spiritual welfare of man, but it does not give any assurance to publish all articles, nor does it accept responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

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نحمدہٗ ونصلی علیٰ رسولہ الکریم

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The 78th Ahmadiyya Annual Gathering

Inaugurating the mammoth gathering at the morning session of the 78th Ahmadiyya Conference at Rabwah on 26th December, 1969, the Commander of the Faithful, Hazrat Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih III, said :

"When, under the command of Allah, the Magnificent, the Promised Messiah (peace be on him) called the nation of Islam to come over to him and to listen to him and to render sacrifices and practise self-denial for the glory of Islam, he observed "The Holy Lord of Majesty has granted me the zeal to seek for them the light that delivers man from the bondage of ego and Satan and conducts him with spontaniety to the ways of God, the Sublime; and to seek for them the Holy Spirit that is born out of the conflux of perfect providence and sincere worshipfulness, and further seek their deliverance through denunciation of the unholy spirit born out of the close alliance of the evil-bidding spirit and the Satan. I shall, therefore, by the grace of Almighty, not relax, nor become indifferent in seeking the well-being of my comrades who have joined the movement with a

truthful heart. I would even risk death so that they may live". (Ishtihar dated March 4, 1889).

Allah, the Glorious. has, likewise, inspired my heart with the enthusiasm to sacrifice my life for you. I keep praying for you in every manner. When you are on your way to the Annaul Meeting, keeping the hardships of the journey in my mind, I pray to Allah for your protection and security. When you arrive here I pray that no harm should come to you on account of some negligence on the part of our volunteer—workers. Again I keep worrying lest you should miss the objective of your visit through some evil of your ego.".

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The Imam then asked the congregation to join him in prayer that he addressed to the Almighty Lord of Honor and Excellence in these words : "Allah be praised, all glory belongs to Him ! O Lord, We thank Thee for the innumerable and limitless gifts Thou hast granted us through the manifestations of Thy pure Providence and graciousness which, Our prayer, our petitions, our efforts, and our exertions could never merit. But O Our Sustainer, Thou doth indeed hear the prayers of Thy humble servants. And, O our Lord, Thou doth by Thy unbounden mercy generously reward effort and exertion. Grant us then the power to pray and to work assiduously and accept our prayers and our works and grant us the gifts that they merit, making us Thy true servants and impart to us sincerity and integrity and sustain us in virtue and righteousness and ordain for us a happy life and make prosperity and success our portion.

O our Lord, we lack knowledge and strength, we cannot find the approaches to Thy pleasure without Thy help and support. O our God, pray condescend to fill our bosoms and our hearts with the love of Thy person so that we may run to Thee like fleet-footed thoroughbreds, making for Thy Presence.

O Thou whose love exceeds the affection of parents, lift us with love and hold us in Thy lap. Pride and arrogance have been spurned and rejected by Thee and humility and humbleness are the

serving-maids around Thy Throne. O Lord, make them also the favorites of our hearts. Negation is the reality and core of our being. Lord, keep us firmly grounded in this verity. Let not our young man take pride in his youth nor our old man in his staff nor our wise and sagacious boast of his wisdom and sagacity nor let a learned Doctor put faith in the soundness of his knowledge and appropriateness of his wisdom and nor should our Divinely-inspired rest on his revelations and visions or the fervor of his prayers. For, O Our Adored Lord, Thou does spurn from Thy Presence whom Thou wisheth and doth enlist among Thy elect whom Thou pleaseth.

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O our God, we, Thy humble and resourceless servants, are groping for attaining to total obedience, devoted to Thy worship, but are, nevertheless, like the muddy waters of flood because of distractions and satanic insinuations and barren ideas and fatal notions and dark thoughts and cannot disengage ourselves from doubt and misgiving. O Lord of perfect Mercy, show us Thy fathomless grace, so that we may acquire ultimate certitude in faith. O Most Compassionate, of all the Compassionate we seek Thy support and beg help of Thee alone, for eagerness, passionate fervor, for receptivity of heart, for fulsomeness of faith, for the readiness to respond to Thy commands, for rapture and for light and for adorning the heart with the ornaments of insights and the robes of verities and truth so that we may, by Thy beneficence and benevolence, excel in the race-course of certainty and may invade the river of profoundities and realities.

O Gracious Lord, the waves of selfish desires keep billowing and keep submerging us. The assaults of the ego keep rotating and the captives of selfish desires become casualties. Few, very few survive the raid of the evil-bidding spirit. O our Beneficient Lord, pray grant us Thy security. O True Healer, visit us in the robe of an efficient physician. Draw us towards Thyself, close to thy bosom, so that we may become infatuated with Thy love and be cured of all the ailments of the soul. Grant us felicity and grant us the strength to ever abide in it

and enlist us among Thy clean servants.

O our Guide, the straight path is the greatest boon, the root of every favour and the gateway to every grant. O our Adored Lord and our sole objective, show us the right path, grant us this never-dying empire. May Thy graces and favors descend on us incessantly! Prepare us for receving these boons and benefits and make us worthy of them so that after the night of darkness we may find the life of happiness and a light that dispels every gloom and every sombreness so that before loss and perdition overtake us we are delivered of every slip and every misguidance. O our Lord and our Sovereign, by Thy grace kindle the flame of Thy love in our hearts. Grant us certitude in faith by means of Thy signs. O our most Adorable Lord, lift the veil from Thy face and let us have a glimpse of Thy luminous countenance.

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O Beneficient Lord, may the illumining rays of Thy benevolence pervade our mortal beings! May, every particle of ours be Thy offering. May the burning of Thy love ever warm up our bosoms! May the manifestation of Thy glory and Thy Majesty take hold of us in such a manner that the world and all that it holds should appear to us as dead compared to Thee! May our every fear be attributed to Thy Person! May we derive pleasure in our pain for Thee and comfort in our isolation shared only with Thee. May our heart be ever ill at ease without Thee!

O our True and Real Benefactor! enrich us with the favor of Thy love. We hand our souls to Thee. We give over our lives to Thee. We devote all our love to Thee exclusively. We come to Thee humbly and submissively. We beg of Thee Thy mercy and Thy compassion. We are negligent. Tear off the veil of our negligence. Make our conduct straight. Our souls fear and tremble in awe of Thy Glory and Majesty. May Thy love become our life-vein. O object of our love, come to our help. Fortify our faith and belief so that we may turn to Thee

wholly, with all our heart, with all our desires, our wisdom, our limbs, our lands and our farms, our commerce and our industry and our trades, turning away from all others than Thee. O our Adored Lord, may none besides Thee remain before our sight! May we be obedient and submissive to Thee alone. !

O Creator of all, O Sovereign of all, why shall we be proud of wealth and the wealthy and why should we be bewitched by them! We present oursleves only before Thy exalted portal like humble and helpless servants. We spurn the world and part with it. We prefer the hereafter and seek it only. O Lord of Power, we place our reliance only on Thy gracious person. O Gracious God, our every particle is an offering to Thee. Pray illumine us with Thy light. Amen".

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Dutiy to God and man

In his Firday sermon, in the afternoon, the Khalifatul Masih III observed that the principal directives of Islam were centered in duties of obedience to God and duties to His creatures. The Promised Messiah, he said, had emphasied the importance of man to his fellowmen in this age, requiring of the well-to-do to befriend their less favored brethren and to overlook the weaknesses of the new-comers.

Progress during the year

Addressing the after-noon session of the Ahmadiyya gathering on December 27, the Amir-ul-mominin first reminded the Community of its foremost duty of rendering thanks to the Almighty for the gratifying response the Fazl-e-Omar Foundation proposal had evoked—the total collection had exceeded the rupees 2.5 million target by 7000,0 rupees. In a survey of the all round progress made by the Movement during the current year, the Khalifatul Masih III said a new community of Yugoslavian Turkish refugee converts had been founded in Sweden and 56 persons had joined the movement in continental Europe and 86 in United States, the American Mission had started its own printing press, new communities were rising in the Middle Eastern coun-

tries and the movement had successfully breached the iron curtain, a mission had also been opened in Japan and a fresh edition of the Dutch translation of the Holy Quran had been published in addition to a one-volume commentary of the Holy Quran in English. Besides this he said the Tehrik-i-Jadid had published 19 books on a wide range of important subjects.

Under the Vaqf-i-Jadid scheme (the new dedication) the Khalifatul Masih listed the conversion of some 600 Hindus of Sindh to Islam as an outstanding achievement. The scheme had made great headway, he said, in teaching the Holy Quran to a large number of learners.

The subscriptions to the Sadr Anjuman-i-Ahmadiyya had shown an increase of about a quarter million rupees, said the Amir-ul-mominin.

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Islam vs Socialism

In a pointed reference to the current mass frenzy about socialism the Khalifatul Masih observed that Islam and not socialism was the true friend of the poor. The most that socialism offered to satisfy was the minimum wants of men but Islam, he said, laid down that whatever a man needed for his maximum development, physical, moral, intellectual, social and spiritual, was his right and should be within his reach. "It is about time that we gave a practical shape to this stand of Islam as far as it lies in our power and our resources" he announced. In this behalf the Khalifatul Masih III appointed a committee to study the requirements of wage - earners in terms of the directions of the Holy Quran and as against that the proportion of the profit that the capitalist is permitted. The Ahmadiyya industrialists, he said, were in a position to work out the Islamic formula of wages and profits and if someone of them found it difficult to make both ends meet, the Ahmadiyya community chest would be prepared to re-imburse him to the extent of twenty percent of his total wage budget, he said.

(*Continued on page 20*)

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Holy Quran : Sura Fatiha Charming Points of Beauty

(*By The Promised Messiah*)

The first fine point of beauty is that in this chapter God, the Sublime, has taught such a nice way of prayer that a better one is not possible ; it embodies all the ingredients necessary for stimulating heart-felt enthusiasm for prayer.

In terms of details, enthusiasm is an indispensable factor for the acceptance of prayer. For a prayer lacking in it is mere rambling talk and not a genuine petition. At the same time, it is apparent that infusion of fervour in prayer is not at the command of man at all times. In fact, it is of paramount importance for man that all these factors that stimulate enthusiasm in the heart should be present in his mind at the time of prayer. And every sensible man knows that there are only two incentives to heart-felt enthusiasm, firstly, holding God as the Perfect, the Mighty and the embodiment of all excellences, believing in His mercies and His Benevolences to be indispensable for one's person and one's survival from beginning to end ; and regarding Him as the source of all graces. Secondly, regarding oneself, and one's fellow beings, as humble and poor and dependent on His help. Those are the two incentives to fervent prayers, and are perfect means of arousing enthusiasm. For, enthusiasm in prayer is induced only when one finds himself utterly feeble and helpless and in need of Divine help and believes with firm faith that He is the Almighty in the highest degree and the Lord of Universal providence and Gracious and Compassionate and Lord of Requitement ; and that it is in His power to meet all human wants. Accordingly, in the beginning of the Sura Fatiha it has been said about Allah, the Glorious, that He is the only Being possessing of praiseworthy excellences and combining in His person all attributes and the only Being Who sustains all the worlds and is the source of all the mercies, granting to all the fruits of their labors. By enumerating these attributes, Allah, the Mag-

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nificent, clearly set forth that all power rests in His Hand and all graces emanate from Him, glorifying His Person so highly that He set Himself as the disposer of all the affairs of this world and the next and the cause of all causes in relation to every thing and source of every benefit, pointing out, at the same time, that independetly of Him and His mercy, the life and comfort and tranquility of no sentient being was possible and next He inculcated humility to man in these words ایاك نعبد ه وایاك نستعین It means "O Thou mainspring of every benevolence, we worship thee alone and seek help from Thee alone i. e. we are altogether humble and can do nothing on our own without the favour of Thy help and support". God, the Sublime, has thus set forth two incentives to prayer, firstly His own glory and the accompanying compassion and secondly humbleness and unworthiness of man. Now it must be understood that these are the only two incentives that should be kept in mind at the time of prayer by the petitioners. Those who enjoy some flavour of prayer they know well that without these two incentives prayer can hardly make a stand and without them the fire of Divine love can hardly send up its flames in prayer. This is very much evident that one who does not keep in mind the glory and mercy and perfect power of God, He can in no wise turn to God and one who would not confess his own humbleness and helplessness and destitution, his soul can never bend down before the Generous Lord. In short, it is a verity which does not call for any deep philosophy to comprehend. In fact, when the magnificence of God and as against that one's own humility and helplessness are borne in on one's mind that particular condition convinces one as being the only approach to genuine prayer. True worshippers appreciate well that the idea of these two aspects is essential for prayer, firstly that God, the Glorious, has the power to grant every kind of providence and sustenance and mercy and reward and that His perfect attributes are ever operative in their spheres and secondly, the idea that man can do nothing by himself, without Divine help and support. And without a doubt both

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these ideas are such that once they take hold of the mind at the time of prayer, they transform suddenly the whole attitude of man, so much so, that a haughty person would break down and a conceited and hard-hearted man would burst into tears. This is the mechanism that quickens an inert corpse. On the realization of these two factors every heart is drawn towards prayer. In brief, this is the spiritual means which turns the soul of man towards God and gives him insight into his own weakness and into Divine help. It is by means of this that man is transported to a state of self-forgetfullness where no trace of his opaque life remains and only the majesty of the One Being, all-Mercy, the Support of every entity and the remedy of every pain and the mainspring of every grace comes in sight, until ultimately, through it, a state of obliteration-in-Allah takes shape at the advent of which man remains neither inclined to creation nor to his own ego nor to his own volition, and is totally lost in the love of God and through true perception (shahud) his own entity and entity of all created beings looks obliterated to him. God has called this state Sirat-i-Mustaqeem—the right path to seek which He taught men the prayer اهدنا الصراط المستقيم "grant us the way of obliteration and Unity and Divine love which the above verse signify and cut us off totally from all others than Thee".

In brief, in order to arouse enthusiasm in prayer, God, the Sublime, granted men these true incentives that transport the petitioner from the state of ego to that of self-forgetfulness and negation. It should be remembered here that it is not at all one of the ways of Sura Fatiha prayer, in fact it is the only way to induce fervour in the heart for prayer and which appeals to human nature as truly responsive to its urge. The truth of the matter is that as God has laid down laws in respect of other matters so has been set down a particular way of prayers which comprises the incentives mentioned in the Sura Fatiha and until these two incentives are in the mind of a man, no enthusiasm in his prayer can at all be aroused. Thus the natural attitude in prayer is the one set down in the Surah Fatiha. This then

is one of the subtle beauties of the afore-said Surah that it has dealt with prayer together with its incentives. Ponder the point well, therefore.

Another pleasing beauty posited in this Sura is that it has enumerated exhaustively the incentives to the acceptance of guidance, for, perfect persuasiveness stated in a cogent manner is a mighty attraction. In terms of rational standards perfect persuasiveness comprises three ingredients, firstly, the personal attributes of the object the persuasion is aimed at should be delineated. This ingredient has been accordingly covered in the verse اهدنا الصراط المستقيم i. e. "show us the way which has qualities of integrity and rectitude, without aught of curve in it". In this verse the inherent virtue of the way has been described to induce enthusiasm for attainment to it. The second ingredient of persuasiveness is that the benefits of the object of persuasion should be enumerated. This ingredient has been accordingly set down in the verse صراط الذين انعمت عليهم i. e. lead us along the way of the former way-farers (سالكين) who were rewarded and honored for taking to it.

Accordingly, by reference to those who succeeded by travelling along this path, He whetted enthusiasm for it. The third persuasiveness is the reference to the wretchedness and decadence of those who discard the object of persuasion. This ingredient has been accordingly pointed out in the verse غير المغضوب عليهم و لاالضالين i. e. "save us from the ways of those who abandoned the right path and took to other ways and incurred Divine wrath and were lost". In this verse, He, accordingly warned against the disasters that befall in the event of deviating from the right path.

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In brief, in the Surah Fatiha, He incorporated all the three ingredients of persuasiveness in a beautiful manner; He referred to the qualities and advantages of the right path and to the disaster and wretchedness of those who abandon it, so that people of good disposition may be inclined to it on hearing of its inherent virtues and those who seek advantages may be eager

in their hearts for it, on learning about its benefits and others may fear the afflictions that befall those who deviate from it.

This then is another point of fine beauty that has been disposed of in this manner.

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The third point of elegance in the Sura is that in spite of its punctiliousness about eloquence and fluence, it has beautifully coached its prayer theme, after setting down the praiseworthy excellences of God in an involute and revolute tie-up, a hard enough job to deal with in clarity, keeping a watchful eye at the same time on all the stances of rhetoric and eloquence. Those who cultivate taste in literary finesse they know well how delicate and subtle the involute and revolute combination is. Its breakdown consists of firstly the description of the four attributes in the Divine glorification—He is the Lord of Universal providence, the Gracious, the Compassionate and the Lord of the Day of Judgement and next expressions about rendering worship and seeking help and begging reward have been juxtaposed with such art that the expression having utmost correlation with a grace was paired with it. He juxtaposed ایاك نعبد (we worship Thee) to) رب العالمین (The Lord of Universal Providence), for, the right to be worshipped originates in Providence and ایاك نعبد (we worship Thee) is befittingly and appropriately juxtaposed to it ; and ایاك نستعین "We seek Thy help alone" is juxtaposed to Rahman (The Gracious), for Divine help to man and the ability to worship Him and all the constituents of his requirements, on which his welfare here and in the hereafter depend, do not represent the wages of any of his acts but are the manifestations of Graciousness, thus presenting a very close correlation between Rahmaniyyat (graciousness) and prayer for Divine help (Istianat). And similarly اهدنا الصراط المستقیم "guide us to the right path" was juxtaposed to Rahim (the Compassionate). For, prayer is an effort and a striving and the rewards that work merits owes its incidence to the Divine attribute Rahimiyyat (Compassion). And صراط الذین انعمت علیهیم غیر المغضوب علیهم ولاالضالین guide us to the path of those whom Thou rewarded and not of those who incurred

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Thy anger and nor of those who deviated" has been juxtaposed to مالك يوم الدين (Lord of Judgement), for requitement concerns the Lord of the Day of Judgement. Therefore juxtaposition of an expression that comprises petition for reward and for security against torment can be appropriate to it alone.

The fourth subtle point of elegance is that the Sura Fatiha epitomizes all the ends of the Holy Quran. In other words, this Sura is a fine summary of the objectives of the Noble Quran. It is to this that Allah, the Glorious, has pointed "O Prophet, we granted you seven verses of the Sura Fatiha which comprise in a nutshell all the aims of the Holy Quran and have in correlation to them granted the Great Quran" which projects in detail all the religious purposes and it is because of this that this Sura has been called the Mother Book and the all-comprehensive Sura——it is the Mother Book in that all the objectives of the Quran have been drawn from it and it is the all-comprehensive Sura because it embodies in summary all the branches of Quranic sciences. It is because of this that the Holy Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be on him), said that whoso read the Sura Fatiha, he had, so to say, read the whole Quran. In short, both the Holy Quran and the Hadith establish the Sura Fatiha as the mirror of the Quran. In elaboration, it means that of the objectives of the Holy Quran, one is its description of all the perfect excellences of the Supreme Lord ; it explains at length the perfectness of His person. This objective is served in الحمد لله (Al-Hamdu lillah) in essence from. For, it means that all perfect praises are worthy of Allah who is the embodiment of all the perfect excellences and worthy of every homage.

The second objective of the Holy Quran is to proclaim that God is the Master-Architect and Creator of the Cosmos and it tells about the beginning of the world and whoever has been admitted into the cycle of life is marked down by it as a creature and those who are at variance with it in these points it exposes their fallacy. This objective has been well summed up in the expression رب العالمين "Lord of universal providence"

The third aim of the Holy Quran is to establish the incidence of Divine grace without reference to merit and to point out His general mercy. This purpose has been expressed in the word Rahman (the Gracious) in summary.

The fourth aim of the Holy Quran is to point up the benevolence of God that is incidental to hard work and effort. This aim is covered by the word مالکیوم الدین "the Lord of the Day of requitment".

The sixth aim of the Holy Quran is to dilate on sincerity and sense of worshipfulness and detergence of the ego of all except Allah and curatives of spiritual maladies and correction of rotten behavioural pattern and exclusive adoration of the One, the Only. This purpose is expressed in a compact form in ایاك نعبده "Thee alone do we serve".

The seventh objective of the Holy Quran is to show God as the true determinant in every work, ascribing to His grace all ability and kindness and help and continence in obedience and security against refractoriness and command of all means of welfare and best of both the worlds and exhorting men to seek His support in all their undertakings. This purpose has been expressed succintly in the phrase ایاك نستعین "We beg Thee alone for help"

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The eighth objective of the Holy Quran is to expound the minutie of the right path (Sirat-i-Mustaqim) with stress the on the need for seeking it through prayer and humility. This purpose is served in اهدنا صراط المستقیم "guide us to the right path", briefly.

The ninth objective of the Holy Quran is to delineate the way and disposition of those whom God graced with His favors and beneficencə so that seekers' hearts may find tranquillity. This purpose has been covered in صراط الذین انعمت علیهیم "The path of those whom than favoured with rewards"

The tenth aim of the Holy Quran is to describe the ways and dispositions of those people who were afflicted with Divine wrath or who strayed away from the path and engaged themselves

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in different kinds of innovations so that seekers of the Truthful Lord may be frightened off those routes. This purpose has been represented in a nutshell in غیر المغضوب علیهم ولا الضالین "not those who suffered Thy wrath nor those who went astray".

These are the ten objectives set down in the Holy Quran which are the main basis of all verities. All these objectives have been incorporated in the Surah Fatiha briefly.

The fifth point of sweet elegance in the sura Fatiha is its incorporation of the most complete and by far the most perfect body of teaching so essential for a seeker of the truth and which is the complete practical code for progressive proximity to the Presence and for spiritual insight, for, the initial step in the direction of progress towards the Proximity o Presence starts from the point of journey when the way-farer, agreeing to death for his ego and preferring a ration of hard-times and suffering, purely for the pleasure of Allah, foregoes all the selfish desires that create a gulf between him and his Generous Lord and diverting his attention from God turn it to pleasures of the flesh and feelings of selfishness and habits of self-indulgence and selfish thoughts and self-pampering aims and towards the creatures and imprison him in his fears and hopes. And the second stage in progress is reached when the hardships suffered in the incipient stage of self-annihilation and the pains that have to be borne after giving up the state of habits, all these griefs take the shape of gifts and instead of hardship one feels pleasure and instead of pain there is rclief and instead of tension there is delight and joy.

The topgrade in prayers is reached when the pilgrim (سالک) develops such close affinity and union and indentification with God and His intentions and wishes that his own indentity and personal role are eliminated and the person and the attributes of the Divine Person without a shadow of darkness and without the least notion of state and siluation are reflected in his mirror-like person and that through the mirror of total self-annihilation which has put the utmost distance between the pilgrim and his selfish desires, the reflection of the Divine person and attributes

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becomes clearly visible. This discourse is totally free from a word in support of the false theories of panthesists and vedantists, for, they did not observe the eternal distinction between the Creator and the creation and because of their dubious hallucinations which are generally encountered in the course of unfinished spiritual mobility exercise or are reactions to strenuous spiritual penance they got involved in deep delusions, or the eyes of some dispensed with the distinction between the spirit of God and the spirit of man in respect of powers and potential and excellences and holiness. It is, however, apparent, that the Omnipotent Lord from whose eternal knowledge nothing is hidden and to Whom no loss or damage can be ascribed and Who is immune to every kind of ignorance and filth and weakness and grief and sorrow and pain and hurt and incarceration, can never be the like of one who is subject to all these afflictions. Can man whose spiritual progress is way behind the further stages that are yet to be negotiated, whose end is beyond ken, be like or identical with the Being possessing all excellences, for whom there is expected no stage of further development ? Can one whose being is mortal and whose soul comprises the deficiencies inherent in the state of createdness, not-withstanding all his filths and weaknesses and impurities and defects and drawbacks ? be the equal of the Being of Majestic attributes who is ever and eternally the most perfect in His excellences and holy quilities, سبحانه وتعالى عما يصفون "Holy is He and far above what they describe-al-Anam R/12)."

In fact, by this third stage of progress, we mean that the pilgrim becomes so lost and consumed up and the Peerless and the Timeless Being so close to him with all His perfect attributes that the flashes of Divinity overwhelm his selfish desires and draw him close so that a complete estrangement and personal enmity is generated between him and his sclfish desires and even those who are slaves of their selfish inclinations. The difference between this and the second grade of progress is that while the pilgrim is in complete agreement with the will of the Lord and His inflictions look like rewards he still lacks that sense of proximity to

Allah that could provoke in him hostility to all other than Allah and make love of the Divine not only the object of his heart but the nature of his heart. In brief, in the second grade of progress, full agreement with God and hostility to others than Him is the aim of the pilgrim and in its achievement lies his pleasure. But in the third grade of progress, agreement with God and hostility to others than Him becomes his very nature which he cannot give up under any circumstances, for, relieving his nous of it is impossible for him. As against this, in the second stage, evaporating it from his nous is quite possible, as the saintliness of a saint is temporary, untill it reaches the third grade and not immune to perils, the reason being that untill the love of God and hostility to others than Him is not incorporated in the nature of man, a trace and a tissue of injustice is still lingering in him. For, he did not acquit himself of his obligations due to Divine providence as worthily as he should have and is still way behind attaining to full Audience. But when Divine love and agreeableness to the will of Allah enter his heart well, so that God is the ear by which he hears and is his eyes with which he sees and is his hand by which he holds and is his feet by which walks, then there is naught of injustice left in him and he has entered the zone of safety against every danger. It is to this grade that Allah has pointed in His words :

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الذين آمنوا ولم يلبسوا ايمانهم بظلم

"Those who believe and coat not their faith with injustice, it is they who are the truly guided— Al-Anam R/2)".

It should hence be understood that these three grades of progress which are the fundamentals of all sciences and insights, in fact which respresent the quint-essence of the entire body of faith, have been stated in the Sura Fatiha with utmost elegance and with an eye to brevity and beauty of style. The first grade of progress which is the first step in the field of closeness to

the Divine Presence, has been imported in this verse اهدنا الصراط المستقيم for, turning away from every curve and tresspass and turning one's face to God totally and taking to the right path is the steep stage, in other words called annihilation (fana), as suddenly giving up every cherished and customary way and abandoning at once selfish desires that had long grown into a habit and throwing overboard all considerations of honor and pride and ostentation and believing all besides Allah as dead and making straight for God, is a step that is like courting death and on this death is contigent spiritual birth. Untill the grain-seed does not mingle with dust and would not discard its shape, the new grain would not come into being. Similarly the body of spiritual birth takes shape thro gh this annihilation (fana). As the ego starts to crumble and man's actions and volition and interest in creatures begins to disintergrate, the limbs of spiritual birth start taking shape untill after total annihilation has taken place, the robe of the second body is granted and the hour for ثم انشاناه خلقنا آخر "Then we sprung forth a new creation" Al Mominaun R/1) strikes.

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And this total annihilation is not possible without the help and support and special grace of the Lord of Absolute power. Therefore the prayer اهدنا الصراط لمستقيم "guide us to the right path" was taught. It means "O God establish us firm in the right path and save us from every kind of crookedness and waywardness." This perfect uprightness and rectitude which we are commanded to solicit is a tough assignment. Its first attack on the pilgrim is like that of the lion confrontation with whom puts one face to face with death. If the pilgrim steadied himself and accepted death then there would be no death for him any more and God is too Noble to confront him again with burning hell-fire. In short, this perfect uprightness is the annihilation that totally wrecks a man's structure of life ; one has to summarily ditch desire and lust and volition and overy selfwilled act. This stage in the journey and pilgrimage of man has a good deal of human penance to head if off, to a large extent. The efforts of

saints and exertions of pilgrims, however, end here and are followed by special heavenly grants to which human efforts make no contribution and instead, a mount from the invisible, and an exceedingly fleet of foot heavenly transport is granted for a tour of the supernal wonders,

The second stage in progress towords the expanse of the Divine Presence has been inculcated in the verse صراط الذين انعمت عليهم "Show us the way of Those who are in the enjoyment of Thy rewards and favors".

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It should be noted in this connection that the recipients of rewards who are favored with the Divine gifts, both physical and spiritual, are not free from hardships: in fact in this testing-ground they encounter so many hardships and such hard times that another person in their situation would run out of his faith-reserves. But they have been qualified as the recipients of rewards, for, they regard calamities as gifts, because of their exuberant love and every pain and hurt they receive from the True Friend, they derive pleasure from it because of their intoxication in love. This is the second stage in progress towards Divine Presence where all the acts of the Adored are exhilarating and whatever comes from Him appears as reward. The genesis of of this state lise in the perfect love and true contact of man to his Beloved and this is a special gift which is not due to any device or planning: it comes from God alone and when it comes the pilgrim then goes through a transformation and all the burdens are taken off his head and every affliction appears as prize and no trace of complaint or grievance is left there. This state is then akin to a man's coming back to life after death. For, he has left all bitterness behind that he was used to encounter in the first stage which confronted him with death all the time. Now, however, he receives rewards from all directions and it is on account of this that it was very appropriate to his situation that he was named "the rewarded one". This state is called baqa (perpetual life), in other words. For, the pilgrim finds himself in this state as good as dead and made alive anew and

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experiences in his nous a great felicity and openheartedness and all the constraints man is subject to are dispelled and the fostering lights of Divinity seem raining down like blessings. At this stage the door to every gift is opened to the pilgrim and the Divine felicities that are hidden away from others are gone through by him. He is benefitted with true visions and honored with Divine address and informed about the subtle secrets of the hereafter and granted knowledge and insight in a good measure. In short, he is given a fair share of physical and spiritual blessings, so muoh so, that he reaches the stage of complete certainty as if he were seeing the Real Determiner with his own eyes. He is thus granted perfect insight into Heavenly secrets; this is *sairfillah* (journey in Allah). This however is the stage when Divine love is given to man but it does not take root in his nature i. e. it does not become part of it and is only deposited in it.

And the third stage in progress towards the expanse of Divine Presence which is the last step has been imported through this verse غير المغضوب عليهم و لاالضالين "Not those who suffered Thy wrath and nor those who went astray". This is the stage when the love of God and hostility to other than God become part of the nature of man and take root in him as his temperament. At this stage man loves Divine disposition as naturally as it is held in high esteem by the One and the Only Himself and the love of the person of the Generous Lord so pervades his heart that it becomes impossible and altogether beyond any means to empty his heart of love of God and if his heart and his life were pounded in the mills of great trails and tests and severe calamities and squashed, his heart and life would not yield anything but the love of God. Man, at this stage, seeks pleasure in aching for Him and regards Him, alone really and truly His heart's ease. This is the stage where all progress towards the Presence ends and man reoches the pinnacle of his perfection assigned for human nature. These are the five charming beauties that we have penned down as a sample package, the spiritual marvels and also other verities and insights

abounding in this Sura being so numerous that it would take a magnum copus to cover them. And as for the spiritual qualities of this blissful Sura, they are so sublime and so wonderful that a seeker after truth is constrained to consider it, without a doubt, the word of the Lord of Absolute power.

(Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya pp. 524-576)

Footnote 11

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(Continued from page 6)

He proposed another committee to study rights of landless farm hands and of small—acrage farmers in land produce in the light of Islamic teachings.

Before dispersing on the evening of 28th December, the audience joined the Imam in a fervant appeal to the Almighty submitted in pin drop silence, for the dominance of Islam and establishment of peace in the world under the aegis of the of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, through the humble efforts of the Ahmadiyya dispensation.

The participants numbering over a hundred thousand came from all parts of the country, in trains, buses and cars. The overseas communities were also well-represented. The host-town offered accommodation and services with a warmth that only genuine Islamic fervour could inspire. The community kitchen was a beehive of activity with some 400 hands working round the clock to prepare food for visiting guests and as many more engaged in serving meals on time.

A. G. S.

The Holy Prophet

By A. G. Soofi

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(III)

Prophet decides to visit Mecca

As the sixth year of the Hijra set in, the word of God said to the Prophet, Surely you will, God willing, enter the house of God safe''. There was great joy in Medina. The Muhajirs (refugees) hoped to return home soon. But they wondered how. Will they have to go to war against Mecca ? Or will the Qureish give in peacefully ? The Prophet soon decided to pay a visit to Mecca. He made his wish known to the local people. Agents were also sent to friendly tribes to apprise them of his intention. They were asked to accompamy the Muslims to the Kaaba. They were asked to accompany the Muslims to the Kaaba. He also made known the purpose of his visit. It was not war, he said. It was to make a pilgrimage (Umrah). He wanted non-Muslims to go with him too. The idea was that his good will would thus be clear to the Meccans.

The party proceeded as planned. The Prophet had 1400 companions, both Muhajirs and Ansars. There were also some non-Muslim tribcsmen in the multitude accompanying him. Muslims, had their swords sheathed as was the custom.

Prophet by-passes Meccan Forces

When the Qureish learnt that the Prophet was on his way, they sent an army to meet him. When he reached Usfan, he was told that the Meccan forces were not very far. The Prophet felt deeply grieved for the Meccans. He said ' Wars have ruined them and yet they have no sense''. But he wanted to avoid war. He had come for a peaceful purpose. When he saw the Meccan army coming, he started on a side-path that

led to Mecca. When Meccans saw this, they feared the Prophet was marching fo attack Mecca. They turned back so that they could reach Mecca before the Prophet would. They planned to give him battle there.

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The Bait-ul-Ridhwan

The Prophet stopped at Hudaibia. He said he would agree to any terms the Qureish gave, if conductive to public welfare. The Qureish were also very uneasy. They knew that if they lost the battle this time, they would lose Mecca forever. They, therefore, sent agents to the Prophet to talk peace terms. The agents advised the Qureish to let the Muslims in. Hulaish told them that his tribe would not stand in the way of Muhammad. Another agent, Urwah, also advised them to change their minds. He said, "I have been to the courts of Iran, Rome and Abyssinia. I saw no king with the majesty of Muhammad". The Prophet also sent an agent to Mecca. The Qureish killed his camel and attaked him. At night some Meccan youth stoned the Muslim camp . They were taken prisoners. In the morning the Prophet set them all free. The Prophet next proposed to send Umar to speak to Meccans. He said the Qureish were very angry with him and he had little mercy for them. The Prophet then sent Uthman. The Meccans permitted him to make the pilgrimage. He refused. He said, he would not if the Prophet did not. The Qureish answered that they would not let him that year. News reached the Muslims that the Qureish had killed Uthman. There was great anger among them. The Prophet called them all to assemble under a tree. There they took an oath at his hands to punish Meccans. Placing his right hand on his left he said it was Uthman's hand.

The Hudaibia Treaty

After some time peace was made. The Qureish agreed to let the Prophet visit the Kaaba the next year. The Prophet agreed to go back that year. He agreed to send back to Mecca

the Muslims who escape from Mecca. He also agreed to return to the Qureish any Muslim who gave up Islam. Both parties agreed to end war for ten years. Both were free to make friendship with other tribes.

Medina was a Muslim state now. Islam had a right to stay in Arabia and the Prophet was the head of the State. Mecca had agreed to that much. The Hudaibia treaty was thus a great victory. But a greater one was yet to come.

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Khaiber Fort Reduced

The Jews of Khaiber began hostilities. Efforts to make peace with them failed. The Prophet took to the field with 1000 Muslims. The Jews had very strong forts. The Prophet gave Ali the flag of Islam. Ali fought with unusual courage. The Jews gave in. The Prophet let them stay there on easy terms. They agreed to give half the produce of the land to him.

Relations with Jews were now completely normal. But some among them were very angry at heart. A Jewish lady once invited the Prophet and his companions to dinner. She poisoned the food. The Prophet refused to eat. She admitted her crime. She was forgiven. But Muslims lost all faith in the Jews and never trusted them any more. Relations between the Jews and Muslims have remained strained since.

Embassies to Neighbouring States

On return to Medina, the Prophet sent embassies to Iran, Abyssinia, Rome, Egypt, Umman, Bahrein, Ghassan, Yamama and Yemen.

The Roman emperor read the Prophet's letter with due deference. The Iranian emperor tore it to pieces. On hearing this, the Prophet said that God would treat his empire in the same manner. The Negus received the Embassy very respectfully. The king of Egypt sent to the Prophet costly presents. Yemen and Umman showed disrespect to the envoys. The Amir of Bahrein accepted Islam. The Amir of Yamama was very

rude to the agent of the Prophet.

Peaceful visit to Mecca

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A year after the Hudaibia treaty, the Prophet set forth to Mecca with 10.000 Muslims. They carried their swords in their sheaths. The Meccans left the town. They did not like to come into contact with the Muslims. The Prophet and his men performed the pilgrimage. They offered prayers in the Holy House. The Meccans watched them with wonder from the hills, The Prophet returned to Medina after staying three days in Mecca.

A quiet change began to take place among the Qureish soon after the Prophet's visit to the Holy House. They knew they had been defeated. They saw that Islam was in power. They also saw with their own eyes that Muslims were better men. Their great commander Khalid bin Walid said, "It is now clear to the wise that Muhammad is not a sorcerer. Nor is he a poet. His speech is the word of God. It is therefore, the duty of all to obey him". Khalid joined Islam. He was soon followed by Amr bin al-As and Uthman bin Talha.

Muslim Envoy and Teachers Killed

Fifteen teachers sent by the Prophet to Zati Talh (Syria) were attacked by the tribes. Fourteen were killed. The Prophet's ambassador to the emperor of Rome was intercepted by Shurah_bil, the ruler of Ghassan, and was murdered. The Prophet sent a force to punish the killers. He enjoined on them : Fear of God and just treatment of Muslim comrades. "Go to war in the name of Allah and fight the enemy in Syria, your enemy and Allah's enemy. You will meet in Syria people who remember God much in their houses of worship. Molest them not and have no quarrel with them. Neither kill the women nor children nor the old nor the blind. Neither cut down trees nor pull down houses".

Three thousand Muslims faced an army of 100,000 enemies. Zaid bin Haris, the Muslim commander, fell fighting. Jafar bin Abu Talib took the command. He too was killed. Abdullah bin

Ravah followed next. He met the same fate. Then Khalid bin Walid took over. The Muslims gave hard blows to the enemy but they were many and the Muslims were few. Khalid moved away a large section of the army at night. They marched up in the morning. The enemy thought the Muslims had received fresh help. They stopped their attack and withdrew. The Muslims made a quiet retreat from Mauta, the field of battle. Later a force was sent by the Prophet under Amr bin al-As. He was helped with another force under Abu Ubaida bin al-Jarrah. Abu Bakr and Omar were also serving under his command. The enemy force dispersed without giving battle. Many tribes joined Islam after this victory. The Arab volunteers who had helped the enemy walked over to the Muslims.

Chapter XIII

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Prophet Marches on Mecca

After the treaty at Hudaibia, the Muslims made friends with Banu Khuzaa. The Qureish made friends with Banu Bakr. Trouble shot up between the two tribes. Some men of Banu Bakr, with the help of a party of Meccans, attacked a party of Banu Khuzaa at night at Vatir. They killed them in their sleep. Their chief Amr bin Salam applied to the Prophet for help. The Prophet was bound under treaty to come to their aid. He ordered Muslims to stand by.

The Prophet marched on Mecca with ten thousand men. He prayed for a victory without blood. The army travelled fast and were soon near Mecca. Abbas begged the Prophet for mercy on behalf of the Qureish. The Prophet did not want war. He sent Abbas to the town to work for peace. Abbas brought Abu Sufian to the Prophet's camp. Abu Sufian saw a big army there. Every tribe had its own camp-fire. The sight gave him a big fright. When he faced the Prophet, he was no more the big-mouthed enemy who had boasted loud at Uhud. He knew the Prophet had won. He knew the idols of the Qureish had lost.

He had the sense to know what was coming. He had to save Mecca. He could do so only by making peace. He appealed to the Prophet for mercy. It was granted. Abu Sufian, the enemy war lord, was from that moment a Muslim. Abbas begged the Prophet for a favour for Abu Sufian. "Why not"? said the Prophet "Whoso enters his house shall be safe. Whoso keeps indoors shall be safe. Whoso enters the Holy House shall be safe."

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A Peaceful Entry

Abu Sufian hurried to Mecca. From the top of a hill, he said, "O Qureish, Muhammad is here with what you cannot fight. Whoso enters my house shall be safe." The Prophet then proceeded to Mecca. On the way he made a halt at Zitowa. As he saw no Meccan coming to give him battle, he gave thanks to God. Then the forces of the Prophet made a peaceful entry into the town. The Prophet first visited the Kaaba. There he made a short speech. He said, "There is none worthy of worship but Allah. He made good his promise and helped His servant and defeated all the tribes". He next said all men were equal and that all were children of Adam and made of dust.

Prophet Announces General Amnesty

He then asked the Meccans, "O Qureish, what kind of treatment do you expect from me"? They said, "Mercy". He answered back, "There shall be no action against you today. Go, you are all free". Then the House of God was cleared of all idols. The Qureish saw their gods in dust. They wondered how helpless the false deities were. The Prophet then strictly forbade fighting in Mecca.

Battle With Hawazan

Tribes from everywhere started accepting Islam. Some Meccan chiefs also became Muslims. Two weeks later news reached that the Hawazan were preparing to march on Mecca. The Prophet proceeded to engage the enemy with an army of twelve thousand. The Hawazan were great soldiers and expert archers.

They had taken their positions in the pass. When the Muslim army got through, they rained arrows on them. Some Meccans had also joined them to fight the aggressive tribe. They had not yet accepted Islam. And as they were caught between the cross fire of enemy archers, they went into panic and ran helterskelter, The ranks of Muslims were thus broken and their mounts got out of hand. When the Prophet called them back to victory, suddenly the panic ended. Muslims were again in good spirit. They threw themselves into the fray with great courage. They had no fear of death. The Hawazan soon knew they had no chance of victory. They fled leaving behind their families and their flocks. Their commander, Malik bin Auf, took refuge in Taif. Among the prisoners of war was a lady named Shaima. She was the daughter of Halima, the Prophet's foster-mother. When Muslims captured her, she said, "Do you know, I am the foster-sister of your Lord"? They did not believe her and brought her to the Prophet. On seeing her, the Prophet laid out his sheet for her to sit. Then he said to Shaima, "Sister, if you want to stay with me, my house is yours". But she wanted to go back. The Prophet sent her away with many presents. All the prisoners of her tribe went free.

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Taif Captured

Shortly after this, the Prophet started for Taif. The Muslims laid siege to the fort where Malik bin Auf had taken refuge. The people of Taif had only one fear. They figured the Muslims would burn down their gardens. This was their only wealth. They told the Prophet to take over all their gardens. He lifted the siege.

The Prophet later announced a reward of 100 camels for Malik bin Auf. He also promised to set free his prisoners of war. The only condition was that he should give himself up. Malik bin Auf lost no time in winning the prize.

Prophet's Memorable Address to Ansars

Before leaving for Medina, the Prophet made grants to some

chiefs of Mecca who had accepted Islam. Abu Sufiyan, his son Muavia, Haris bin Hisham, Hakim bin Hizam and Safvan bin Umayya were given 100 camels each. Lesser men were granted 50 each. The Prophet gave gifts freely. This did not please some young Ansars. They complained that while they had fought the battles, the Qureish had got the rewards. On hearing this, the Prophet sommoned the Ansars to a conference. He said, "O Ansar, what is this that you have said? What is this that has come to me from you? You forget, you were on the wrong path, and Allah guided you. You were poor and Allah gave you plenty. You were enemies and Allah made you brothers. By God, you can certainly say to me that after my people had called me a liar, I came to you and you believed me; that others harmed me and you aided me, that when I was turned out of my home, you gave me refuge.

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"O Ansar, what I am giving away is a little wealth so that this people may have a warm heart for the faith. O Ansar, would you not like that others should take away some camels and some goats but that you should take away with you the Prophet of Allah? By Allah, who holds the life of Muhammad in his hands, if I were not a Muhajir, I would have loved to be an Ansari. And if others went by one path and the Ansar by another, I would surely go by the path the Ansar took. O Allah, have mercy on the Ansar and on their children and on the children of their children!"

The Ansars were moved to tears. They deeply regretted the folly of some of their raw youth. They all said with one voice, "We are pleased with the Prophet of Allah as our share and as our lot".

After performing the Umrah (pilgrimage) the Prophet left for Medina.

More tribes came to Medina to join Islam. Soon after this, Zainab, a daughter of the Holy Prophet, died. The same year a son was born to the Prophet. He was named Ibrahim.

The Poor-Rate Imposed

The Prophet appointed officers to collect Zakat. This tax was for the benefit of the poor. Every Muslim who had clear assets worth forty dollars had to pay one dollar as poor-rate. The tax is a yearly due.

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Chapter XIV

There were persistent remours and reports that Romans were prepariug for war. The Prophet made ready to meet the new danger. The season was hot and the journey was long. The enemy had large armies. Muslims could not raise even a fraction of it, They did not have much money. The Prophet made an appeal for funds. Abu Bakr came with all that he had. Others too gave generously. Osman gave 300 camels and a big amount of ready cash. When the Muslim army reached Hajar, the Prophet forbade them to drink the water of that place. The Samud, a rich tribe, used to live there in the past. They had ill-treated their Prophet Hud. They had been punished. God had been angry with that land. The Prophet, therefore, would not touch even the water of that place. Next day there came a heavy rain. Muslims had plenty of fresh water to drink. When the Prophet reached the frontier he found no signs of Roman concentrations. There was no fight, therefore. The Prophet made the frontier secure. The rulers of the area were Christians. Mutually advantageous treaties were made with them.

The Prophet's son Ibrahim passed away. It grieved him deeply but he remained patient and resigned to the will of God.

Tribes Join Islam in Legions

After the return of the Prophet from Tabuk, the whole Arabia realized that Islam had become a great power. Tribe after tribe came from far and near to join the ranks of the new faith. There were both pagans and Christains. The Prophet sent teachers and governors to the new areas. He advised Meaz, who was appointed governor of Yemen, in these words. "Make things easy for the people. Do not make it hard for them. Give them

happiness and do not create hate".

The Farewell Pilgrimage

It was the tenth year of the Hijra now. The Muslims were the rulers of Arabia. They were one brotherhood. They worshipped one God and followed one Prophet. Past enmities had been forgotten. New friendships had grown fast and firm. The Prophet made known that he would be going to Mecca for Haj. Men from all over Arabia rushed to Medina. There were to be hundreds of tents around the capital. The Prophet left Mecca with about one hundred thousand Muslims. Next day they wore the *Ihram* dress, two sheets. They all looked alike, the rich and the poor, the master and the servant. Then all turned to God with these words: "At thy service, O Lord, at thy service! There is no partner with Thee; we are at Thy service. For Thee is all priase, from Thee are all gifts and to Thee are all thanks. We are at Thy service; there is no partner with Thee; we are at Thy service".

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(To be Continued)

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A Mighty Recurring Sign

ياتيك من كل فج عميق ياتون من كل فج عميق

(By Ali Muhammad B.A.,B·T.)

The nineteenth century brought about the decline of the magnificent glory of Islam in the Muslim world. With the political decline of the Muslim States the Musalmans, as a nation, deteriorated in commerce, trade, education, and political science. Some zealots among the Muslims who felt for Islam, tried to ameliorate the condition of Muslims by raising the standard of their education ; others thought that commerce and trade was the only means of the amelioration of Muslims. But God, always the Protector of Islam, had a Divine Scheme of His own. The degradation of the Muslims to the lowest ebb demanded that the Muslim nation, as a whole, should be reformed on a spiritual basis, because the spiritual renovation was the sure remedy to lift a nation to the pinnacles of glory. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) was raised in his first dispensation among the unlettered people of Mecca. By example and precept he enabled them to become the best reformed nation on the surface of the earth. In his second dispensation, he was to appear "among others from among them who had not yet joined them". The second appearance of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessins of God be on him) is closely associated with the predomination of Islam over all other religions. As says the Holy Quran :

هوالذی ارسل رسوله بالهدی و دین الحق لیظهره علی الدین

کله و لو کره المشرکون

"He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the Religion of Truth that He may cause it to prevail over all religions even if the idolaters hate it". (61 : 10)

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The second appearance of a prophet is always a spiritual phenomena. It is never physical. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, as a deputy and humble servant of the Holy Prophet, was commissioned in 1883 by God Almighty to reform the Muslims of the day and bring them back to the ways of God. In 1889 he began to initiate pious Muslims in the name of God that they would prefer religion to everything else and mould their lives in strict conformity to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah. In 1891, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi. issued a manifesto bearing on the aims and objects of the proposed Annual Gathering of his followers at Qadian. The manifesto runs thus :

"It should be clear to our sincere friends that the aim of initiation into the Ahmadiyya Movement is that love for the worldly things be cooled down and love of the Holy Prophet be prominent in their hearts and that a state of aloofness from the world be created so that the journey to the other world be made easy. But to gain this object it is essential to spare some time and stay with this humble servant of God, so that one might chance to observe a sure and clear argument which might dispel some lurking weakness of faith or a state of dullness, and more than this, the argument might create a complete faith and eager fondness for religion. So one should be anxious to get a chance to be in the company of the spiritual leader and pray for its attainment. Meanwhile one should try to come and stay (with me) for to be initiated into the Movement and to be careless of being in the company of the Leader renders *bait* (initiation) null and void and only customary. Whereas it is not always possible for every one of the friends to stay for some considerable time in Qadian or pay frequent visits on account of some natural weakness or for want of financial resources for travel or the difficulties of distance. Moreover, since most of them are not habituated to endure hardships or to bear heavy losses simply for the sake of religion, it seems feasible to fix a limited number of days in a year, when the faithful should assemble in Qadian provided

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physical health, leisure and financial resources permit to do so. They should make it a point to attend the opening prayer and the spiritual talks, that will be delivered during the course of the meetings to increase their faith and spiritual uplift (Asmani Faisla)"

Ever since 1891 the Ahmadiyya Gathering has almost invariably been held every year during the last week of December. It is a physical fulfillment of the prophecy which is contained in the well-known revelation which the Promised Messiah received as far back as 1883 which is mentioned in the beginning of the article.

"Presents will be coming to thee by deep rutted ways. *People will be coming to thee by deep-rutted ways.* The number of guests who attended the first Get-together was 75. The following year it rose to 300 and so on and so forth.

We give below a decadal progress of the number of guests beginning from 1891 to 1969. For convenience' sake I have divided the whole period of 78 years into decades and have given the number of guests at the end of each decade. Here is the chart :

Year	Number of guests.
1891	75
1901	1,500
1911	3,000
1921	7,192
1931	18,786
1941	27,209
1951	20,441
1961	80,000
1969	85,000

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Notwithstanding the storm of opposition and the hue and cry raised by the Mullahs and by those who were under their influence against the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, the number of his followers has been ever on the increase. The Annual Gathering is an index of the progress of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

But in 1951 the number of guests shows a decrease which was due to the political holocaust which followed the division of the sub-continent into India and Pakistan.

In 1947 the head-quarters of the Ahmadiyya Community shifted from Qadian to West Pakistan. In the year 1951 the new Headquarter started operating in Rabwah. Every year there has been startling increase in the number of guests till in 1961 the number rose to 80,000, that is thrice the number of guests in 1941. It is curious to note that not only the number of guests, coming to attend the Jalsa every year increased, but there has been an all-round progress in all the departmental activities of the Ahmadiyya Movement, particularly the interest shown by West European Christian nations in Islam through the strenuous efforts of our Ahmadiyya missionaries.

In short, the Institition of the Ahmadiyya Annual Gathering is a mighty Sign that recurs every year and reminds us of the grand fulfillment of the revelation of God which captions this article. This one Sign is more than sufficient to convince seekers after truth of the existence of God and of the truth of the claims of the Promised Messiah. A casual visit to Rabwah during the last week of December will convince one of the truth of this revelation.

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